

International Cooperation in the field of Human Rights (L.4)

General Comment: Permanent Representative to the UN, Sally Mansfield

We thank Venezuela for presenting resolution L.4, *enhancement of international cooperation in the field of human rights*, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Australia acknowledges the importance of international cooperation in assisting States to meet their human rights obligations. Indeed, cooperation is one of the founding principles of this Council.

In the past we have been pleased to support the Council's consensus resolutions calling for international cooperation, including technical assistance and capacity building. We give effect to this principle through our trade, aid and diplomacy efforts. For example, through our aid program we are working with partner governments on numerous programs across the Asia-Pacific region in the spirit of cooperation including to promote and protect human rights.

For this reason, we are concerned at efforts by the main sponsor to introduce language from a political declaration to which many states represented at this Council are not a party. We are also concerned by the introduction of concepts entirely unrelated to international cooperation, which diverge from core principles of international human rights law.

In addition, we are concerned that this resolution seeks to elevate certain rights over others which is incompatible with the principle that human rights are universal, indivisible and inalienable.

Australia does not accept the inference in this resolution that autonomous sanctions are unjust or contrary to international law. Targeted sanctions can be a powerful tool to promote human rights and to hold accountable those who violate or abuse them. Such sanctions can be an effective and legitimate tool of foreign policy, and are fully compliant with international law.

In the spirit of constructive negotiations, Australia and others approached the penholder to seek to address these concerns. We were disappointed that the penholder did not engage with our comments, and was unwilling to make substantive changes.

For all these reasons, Australia calls for a vote on this resolution and will vote no. We encourage other members of the Council to also vote no.